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QUARTERLY REPORT for the period
1 October – 31 December 2012

Taiz Emergency Food Program
Funded by USAID/Food for Peace

COUNTRY CONTACT	HEADQUARTERS CONTACT	PROJECT SUMMARY	
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1. Program Overview

The Taiz Emergency Food Program (TEFP) was initially designed to be implemented over a period of eleven months (1st April 2012- 29th February 2013) in four districts targeting 72,00 households. However, the project currently operates in three districts and expects to run through the end of May 2013, targeting a total of 8,965 households. The project is providing eight months of food commodities to households through a voucher system in the three districts. The three districts are among the areas identified as having high nutritional gaps as a result of political and economic shocks in Yemen. The populations in these districts will be subjected to further severe food insecurity, acute malnutrition and asset depletion in the absence of humanitarian assistance.

Project Objectives and Results

The main objective of the project is to increase food security for 50,400 individuals in 7,200 vulnerable households in Dhubab, Al Waziiyah, Al Mokha and Mawza Districts of Taiz Governorate, Yemen through eight months of targeted emergency food rations during the political transition

The project has three main expected results:

Result 1.1: 7,200 HHs identified that meet the vulnerability and food insecurity criteria

Result 1.2: 7,200 HHs redeem 8 months of commodity vouchers

Result 1.3 7200 HHs have increased household food availability

2. Performance Summary

Summary of Quarterly Progress Report

General Overview

This quarter witnessed a number of achievements. Additional vulnerable households were identified, verified, and finally included in the FFP registry to benefit from food commodities distribution. Distribution vouchers for two months of food commodities covering 8,946 households was completed during the quarter. Additionally, vouchers redeemed by local post offices for the months of June to September 2012 were collected and reconciled, while the collection and reconciliation of vouchers distributed for October and November is ongoing. Four additional staff members were hired to strengthen the FFP team. Periodic data collection of prices on food commodities included in the food basket continued during the reporting period. To ensure gender integration in the FFP program to its maximum, the M&E team began collecting data on Sex and Age Disaggregation Data (SADD) during the quarter.

The FFP team received basic training in hygiene awareness during the quarter, with the objective of conducting hygiene awareness amongst beneficiaries. Data analysis and the drafting of baseline survey report were completed during the quarter. Additionally, the Knowledge Attitude and Practice Survey data collection on nutrition was concluded during the quarter. Finally, a No Cost Extension of the FFP project was submitted to USAID

(DCHA/FFP/DP) on January 3rd, 2013. If approved, the FFP will be extended for an additional three months.

Results:

Result 1.1: 7,200 Households identified that meet the vulnerability and food insecurity criteria

R1.1.1 Identify and target vulnerable households based on established criteria

An additional 1,993 vulnerable households (about 13,951 beneficiaries) were identified, verified and included in the registry. The newly registered beneficiaries, in addition to the existing 6,953 beneficiary households, brings the total number of beneficiary households to 8,946. (*Annex I presents detailed tables on additional beneficiaries*)



Beneficiary Registration in Dhubab district

Result 1.2: 7,200 households redeem 8 months of commodity vouchers

R 1.2.1: Establish commodity voucher mechanism

The voucher distribution mechanism developed and tested in the pilot distribution in June 2012 was adopted as the most efficient method. This mechanism will remain in use up to the end of the project. The voucher mechanism entails an accountable and transparent process. (*Annex IV provides a summary of the voucher redemption process*)

Each beneficiary household receives a set of vouchers comprised of four commodities: rice (7kgs.); wheat flour (25 kgs.); beans (24 cans); and vegetable oil (1.8 liters).

R1.2.2: Implement commodity distribution to vulnerable households through voucher mechanism

During this reporting quarter, beneficiaries received two months of food commodity vouchers covering the months of October and November 2012. The number of beneficiaries receiving food commodity vouchers during the quarter exceeded the original target of 7200 households. The excess numbers of beneficiaries were achieved from savings made by the project. A total of 8,946 households (75,981 beneficiaries) received food commodity vouchers each of the two months. The food commodities received per household per month included wheat flour (25kg); rice (7 kg); beans (24 cans of 410 grams); vegetable oil (1.8 liters). The beans are produced and canned in Yemen, the wheat flour is milled and fortified in Yemen, and the grains are imported from the United States of America.

Both Sex and Age Disaggregation data and baseline data indicates that female headed households constitute a lower proportion of the populations in the three districts. Of the

total 8,946 households benefiting from commodity distribution, 1180 households were headed by females while 7,766 were headed by males.

Within targeted households, children under the age of five are reportedly benefiting from the food commodities. Children up to one year old mainly consume the rice and wheat flour palatably prepared by mothers. Children older than a year consume all the commodities along with the parents. *(See Annex I disaggregated charts for beneficiaries)*

Result 1.3: 7200 Households have increased household food availability

R 1.3.1 Household Baseline Survey

Baseline survey data entry and analysis were completed during the reporting quarter. The baseline survey collected data on the extent of food insecurity in the three project districts and the coping mechanisms of households in response to the situation. A structured household survey questionnaire—incorporating two food security assessment tools—was developed, tested and administered to 380 households in the three districts.

Findings from the baseline survey indicated that food insecurity, in combination with poverty, caused households in the three districts to employ coping strategies that undermine their future. The mean CSI for the three districts was calculated at 93 and the HFIAS Score was 13.5 on a scale of 0-27. **Unlike** the HFIAS the coping strategy index does not have a specific range to determine level of food insecurity, but the higher the score, the more food insecure the households become. A CSI of 93 is an indication of severe food insecurity level, given that most households have adopted extreme coping mechanisms. An end line survey will be conducted and reduction in severe food insecurity will be indicated by a decreased CSI. *(Please see annex III for summary of findings)*

R1.3.2: Nutrition Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) Survey.

A KAP survey on nutrition that began in September 2012 was concluded in the third quarter. The survey was intended to collect data to inform the design of an awareness campaign and training on improved nutrition practices. The campaign is expected to contribute to the reduction of malnutrition in the project communities. At the same time, FFP staff received training in basic hygiene promotion during quarter one. The staff will create hygiene awareness amongst beneficiaries during voucher distributions. Plans are underway to extend the campaign to various schools as well as providing trainings to imams (religious leaders) to include hygiene promotion in their Friday sermons.

R 1.4: Project Monitoring

The TEFPP/ FFP Project have a robust monitoring mechanism in place to identify and respond to irregularities. There is also a grievance/complaint mechanism in place whereby beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, and other concerned persons can report any observed or perceived fraud or irregularity to Mercy Corps. The system has proven to be very successful. *(Please see Annex III for summary)*

R1.4.1. Sex and Age Disaggregation Data (SADD) Collection

FFP project monitoring activities continued during the reporting quarter. The Monitoring and Evaluation team collected Sex and Age Disaggregation Data on beneficiaries in the

three districts. The SADD data is instrumental in providing information on the extent of gender integration in the project and an informed thinking on improving gender integration in future program design and implementation. The data will help to design evidence based gender integrated program in Yemen

R1.4.2. Market Price Monitoring Data Collection

The FFP project also collected market prices for the four commodities in the food basket. The data collection took place in the three districts considered as destinations and Taiz (the origin). *(Please see annex V for market survey summary)* There are price variations amongst the three districts. Generally, the price of 50 kg wheat

Coordination

At the national level, Mercy Corps is represented at the Food Security and Agriculture meeting regularly held in Sana'a. Mercy Corps also submits regular monthly reports to the Food Security and Agriculture sector and participates in food security sector planning meetings. Mercy Corps is also a member of cash/market based programming (CTP) forum held in Sana'a each month. In Taiz, Mercy Corps is a member of the nutrition and health cluster. In addition, a coordination mechanism exists between UNICEF, WFP and Mercy Corps to promote complementarities and avoid duplication of activities.

There is also internal coordination between the TEF/FFP and the ECHO funded Nutrition projects implemented by Mercy Corps in Taiz. There has been a number of staff exchange visits between these projects for cross-learning purposes. The KAP Survey was jointly designed and administered by the Nutrition project and the TEF/FFP projects. The outcome of the data analysis will jointly be discussed and appropriate response plan designed and implemented by the two projects.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges for the team are decreasing, but some remain grave and require caution. There are security challenges whereby armed men demand inclusion on the list of beneficiaries or intimidation of FFP staff by armed men demanding the registration of people of their choice. During one of the FFP voucher distribution in Ja'ashi village, an armed person tore off the distribution list and threatened to shoot at anyone who attempted to touch him.

Lessons Learned

The level of confidence for Mercy Corps has tremendously increased among beneficiaries, community leaders, as well as the skeptics. Mercy Corps staffs are recognized in all of the communities by both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. When community members were asked by the FFP M&E team about how TEF/FFP benefits them, a group of women in Mokha responded, "Our debts have decreased; we are paying our debts from the money we previously used to purchase food." The community based approach used by FFP/TEF promotes dignity and ownership. However, systems are needed to ensure transparency, equity, and accountability for all actors involved in the project.

The design of the voucher mechanism currently in use seems to be effective in achieving the 'Do No Harm' approach". There have neither been complaints from local businessmen

that the project undermines their businesses, nor any increase in prices of the selected commodities due to the presence of the TEF/FFP project. Humanitarian needs are still grave in the communities as some vulnerable people were not targeted due to fund limitation.

Conclusion

Mercy Corps employed rigorous mechanisms to ensure proper targeting of the most vulnerable people as well as the selection of eligible vendors. This required a door-to-door process for over 80% of beneficiaries which spanned over a longer period and pushing the project two months behind schedule. Additionally, insecurity and threats in Al Waziiyah delayed beneficiary registration in hopes that the situation would improve. Additionally, project activities were slowed down during Ramadan in August 2012. Therefore, a three month No Cost extension (NCE) request been submitted to USAID to recover the set back and include additional beneficiaries from savings made by the project.

TEFP/FFP has identified an internal consultant to conduct the Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) research. The research is expected to commence in early February 2013. In addition to comparing the LRP with traditional in-kind food aid and categorizing findings by time savings, cost savings, impacts, and the “do no harm” principle; the research will also while examine several broader questions concerning the effectiveness and impact of LRP compared to other food aid approaches. The research is expected to enable the Yemen team to make the case for future LRP program funding and improve on implementation.